COMIC SHOP NEWS™

500

The Shade ™ & ©1997 DC Comics. ARR.

Starman Shines Brightly in February

If you look up the definition of "sleeper," you might very well see a ***Starman*** cover pictured beside the listing; since the book's introduction two and a half years ago, Starman has quietly and unobtrusively become one of the most highly regarded titles in the DC Universe. Without fanfare, the book has continued to captivate readers, establishing itself as one of the must-read superhero books for fans who wanted more than just punch-em-out adventure.

But after two and a half years, it's time for a little fanfare. No more silence—DC is making sure that everyone knows what a star attraction this book is, thanks to the outstanding efforts of creators James Robinson, Tony Harris, and Wade Von Grawbadger. They're proclaiming, very loudly, that February is Starman Month at DC, and they're offering a variety of publications and merchandising tie-ins to make sure that no one misses the celebration.

When James Robinson first proposed his Starman series, he was determined to avoid the revisionist-hero creative approach of abandoning all the want before. "When I set out to do ***Starman***, all I really did was to follow Frank Miller's lead," Robinson said. "When you read ***The Dark Knight Returns***, you see this mature, modern handling of a familiar character—but you can still see Jerry Robinson and Dick Sprang peeking through. With ***Starman***, I've tried to do the same thing: I've tried to do a modern, revived character, but I've never turned my back on the roots that gave birth to that character and that name, and I tried to maintain the sort of nostalgia and respect that I felt for old DC books. I think it's the mixture of dark edginess with the lighter, brighter homage to times past that appeals to readers and catches readers looking for one or the other off-guard—in a way, they get to have their cake and eat it, too."

Robinson is confident that this appreciation of the history of the character has helped to make the new ***Starman*** one of the most successful superhero additions to the DC Universe in the past few years. "The reason that Flash, Green Lantern, and other characters work is that there is a sense of a heritage, a lineage and a heritage being passed," Robinson said. "With Starman, there was a more scattershot approach; because they introduced another Starman, it was a new character with the name being the only link. I've tried to pull all that together, to acknowledge the hero's past rather than just starting over from scratch again."

The centerpiece of Starman Month is ***Starman #25***, a stand-alone issue designed whose extra-length story is designed to introduce new readers to the world of Starman while offering established fans of the book an opportunity to gain new insights into the superpowered residents of Opal City. The entire story is seen through the eyes of Golden Age supervillain Strongman Benetti. ***Starman #29***, a 32-page comic with no interior ads, also features a history of the book and a note from James Robinson; the $2.25 comic is scheduled for February 5th release.

Starman: Night and Day offers newcomers a chance to enjoy some critically acclaimed—and very hard-to-find—tales from ***Starman #s 7-10*** and ***12-16***, including the reappearance of the blue alien Starman and the beginning of the new Mist's mission of vengeance. ***Starman: Night and Day***, a 240-page trade paperback scheduled for February 19th release, is priced at $14.95. DC is also relisting the first volume, the $12.95 ***Starman: Sins of the Father*** reprinting ***Starman #s 0-6***, in early February.

"When Starman began, I really hoped that readers would like what we were doing," Robinson said, "but I never would have predicted that the book would be popular enough that there would be two trade paperbacks of early stories already. It's very flattering, actually."

One monthly comic, two hefty trade paperbacks... Want still more to read? You're in luck, because there's a Starman spinoff limited series also scheduled to begin in February. ***The Shade***, written by James Robinson and illustrated by Gene Ha (#1); JH Williams III & Mick Gray (#2), Bret Blevins (#3), and Michael Zulli (#4), presents a panoramic view of the life of an immortal force of nature who has become Starman's silent partner. Each issue takes place at a different moment in history, ranging from 1838 Paris to the end of WWII. It's not just the story of the Shade; it also involves the Ludlows, a family of thieves and killers who become the Shade's sworn enemies. Look for such Golden Age heroes as Jay (Flash) Garrick and the Spider to make an appearance in the four-issue miniseries. ***The Shade #1***, a $2.25 comic, is scheduled for February 12th release.

That may be all DC has to offer Starman readers, but there are four other items of interest to Starman fans. DC is offering two different Starman shirts—a white ***Starman T-Shirt*** with a Tony Harris illustration of the hero and a black ***Starman Henley*** depicting the Starman logo on the right front of the shirt and the 3-color Starman zodiac symbol on the back. The T-shirt, priced at $15.95, should be in stores on February 5th; the $34.95 henley follows a week later.

Want a perfect accessory for your jacket or cap? The ***Starman Badge*** is a 2" copper stamped badge with a black nickel finish; it features a silver-tone star with black enamel enhancements. This unique collectible, due in stores on February 19th, is priced at $8.95.

Finally, you'll always know when it's Starman time if you have your ***Starman Zodiac Watch***. This collectible timepiece features the Starman zodiac symbol on the front of the watch; the $39.95 watch should be available on February 26th.

"I hope that this Starman Month generates even more interest in the character," James Robinson said. "I think we have some pretty exciting things to come in the immediate future that would surprise people. I'm bringing in some guest stars like Alan Scott for an issue, and we have some other unexpected appearances in the planning stages."

Is it possible to make a star burn even brighter? DC seems to think so, and they're making February the month for Starman to shine!

by CLIFF BIGGERS

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QUICKSHOTS

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Editorial Office:
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (770) 973-6949
cliffbig@netdepot.com

Business Office:
1266 W. Paces Ferry Rd. #445
Atlanta, GA 30327
(404) 261-8101
wardo@netdepot.com

Visit our WWW site at:
http://www.dreamsville.com/CSN/

Editors
Cliff Biggers & Ward Batty

Publisher
Comic Shop News, Inc.

The Princess & the Peace

You say you want more ***Outlanders?*** Sorry, no can do—but Dark Horse can deliver something almost as good. They've put together a new miniseries by ***Outland-ers*** creator *Johji Manabe*, and this one is every bit as fast-paced and exciting as ***Outlanders*** ever was.

Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess is a science fiction saga set more than two millennia in the future, when peace is about to come to the land of Ledomiam at last. This peace isn't without a price, however: Karula Olzen, the second daughter of the Ledomiam royal family, is being sent to her enemy's capital to sign a Treaty of Amity that would reduce her country to little more than a vassal state in exchange for an end to the long-running war. At least that's what Karula's family thinks she's going to do... but once she gets behind enemy lines, she has some very different plans! ***Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess***, a six-issue limited series by Johji Manabe (translated by *Dana Lewis* and *Toren Smith*), is the first of three Manabe miniseries Dark Horse will be publishing. ***Drakuun: Rise of the Dragon Princess #1***, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for February 12th release.

CSNsider

The biggest news is Marvel's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing on the morning of December 27th; spokespeople at Marvel explain that this filing should not in any affect the regular publication of Marvel Comics in the foreseeable future, if ever. This is a recapitalization measure being taken to make sure that Marvel has a steady flow of capital to carry out its business operations as well as financial restructuring. "We would have preferred to re-capitalize Marvel without having to seek the aid of the court, but the actions and positions taken by the bondholders prevented that approach," Marvel chairman/CEO *Scott Sassa* said. "The key to putting Marvel on track for a dynamic and profitable future is a quick resolution to this situation, and we want to get on with it... We expect to continue doing business with our customers and licensees under norma business terms." Again, business will continue uninterrupted, and any reports that Marvel is "out of business" are incorrect and unfounded... *Garth Ennis*, *Amanda Connor*, and *Jimmy Palmiotti* do the honors on the Event Comics/Top Cow crossover, ***Painkiller Jane Vs. the Darkness: Stripper***, a March release book that will feature four different covers... ***The Official X-Files Magazine***, formerly published by Topps, jumps to MVP Licensing beginning in March. "We're enthusiastic about working with MVP," ***X-Files'*** *Chris Carter* said. "MVP will be provided with access to the cast and production office in order to provide fans with a unique perspective of the show"... *Christopher Golden*, *William Tucci*, and *Val Mayerik* introduce a new hero in the Crusade Comics Universe when ***TCB***, a three-issue limited series, debuts in April. Mayerik is supplying fully painted art for th series about former ***Shi*** supporting cast member Peter DeNyse, a motorcycle-riding, gun-wielding urban Robin Hood... Contrary to earlier reports, *Adam Kubert* will indeed by taking over as artist on ***The Incredible Hulk***, according to writer *Peter David*; look for the first Kubert-art issue in April... *Gary Frank* will be leaving ***Supergirl*** in the next few months; no word yet on who will be replacing him on the series... USPC Games has announced that they will discontinue twenty of the rare and all ten ultra-rare X-Files cards when they release the second edition ***X-Files: The Truth Is Out There*** game. These cards will be replaced by thirty all-new rare and ultra-rare cards... Who's playing Zorro in the TriStar Pictures film: *Anthony Hopkins* or *Antonio Banderas*? Well, both are, actually—Banderas will play the young Zorro while Hopkins plays the older Zorro. The *Steven Spielberg* production, to be directed by *Martin Campbell*, begins filming this month... ***The New Adventures of Lois and Clark*** is trading timeslots with ***America's Funniest Home Videos*** this month, meaning that Superman fans can enjoy the series at 7 pm rather than 8. If this change boosts flagging ratings for the series, look for it to become permanent... *Len Kaminski* has announced that he is writing a new ***Creeper*** series for DC; no word yet on artist or scheduling... ***Asrael/Ash***, the DC/Event crossover production by *Dennis O'Neil*, *Joe Quesada*, and *Jimmy Palmiotti*, is now firmly scheduled for March 26th release... The long wait for a new *Evan Dorkin* comic comes to an end in March with the release of ***Dork #4*** from Slave Labor... A ***JLA/WildCATs*** crossover book involving the popular DC and Image teams is in the works for summer '96 release... This May, DC will debut a collectible bas-relief sculpture by *William Paquet* based on the classic cover to ***Action Comics #1***; the cold-cast porcelain bronze-finish sculpture will be limited to no more than 3000 castings... And speaking of items Superman-related, DC is also producing a ***Superman '97 Limited Edition Watch*** featuring the new emblem from the redesigned Superman costume; look for it in late May or early June... The ***BattleTech Collectible Card Game Limited Edition Starters*** have totally sold out from the manufacturer—but fret not, because an unlimited edition is already in the works for March release, with the first ***BattleTech*** expansion following in April... ***Arcanum***, the Top Cow Studios series that was delayed from last October, has been rescheduled for March release... ***High Caliber***, a new anthology book from Caliber Comics, will feature two full-length comics in each 64-page $3.95 issue; the first issue, slated for March release, will feature ***Ghost Sonata*** by *Gary Reed* and *Andy Bennett* and ***Young Dracula*** by *Gary Francis* and *Daniel Preece*... *Dan Jurgens* and *Marat Mychaels'* ***Spider-Man/Badrock*** crossover two-issue miniseries, originally scheduled for release from Image, should appear in March from *Rob Liefeld's* Maximum Press imprint... Byron Preiss Multimedia and Boulevard Books have announced their publishing plans for the second half of '97. ***X-Men: Smoke & Mirrors*** by *ehiki hes zAbar* pits the team against Sinister; ***X-Men: Empire's End*** by *Diane Duane* unites the X-Men and the Shi'ar against a galactic threat; Wolverine's Journey by *Jo Duffy* focuses on the most popular X-Man of all; ***Untold Tales of Spider-Man***, edited by *Stan Lee* and *Kurt Busiek*, features stories by *Will Murray*, *Tom De Falco*, *Ann Nocenti*, *Danny Fingeroth*, and others depicting tales from Spider-Man's past; ***Spider-Man & Fantastic Four: Wreckage***, by *Pierce Askegren* and *Eric Fein*, pitting the heroes against Dr. Doom and Dr. Octopus; and paperback editions of *Diane Duane's* ***Spider-Man: The Octopus Agenda*** and the *Stan Lee*-edited ***Ultimate Silver Surfer***... Not only will ***Thunderbolts #2*** feature a variant cover by *Mark Bagley* when it ships in March, but the variant cover edition will reveal the secret of the Thunderbolts that *Kurt Busiek* alluded to in a recent ***CSN*** article... In April, Antarctic expands its ***Warrior Nun Areala*** family of books with ***Diesel***, a three issue miniseries by *Jochen Weltjens* focusing on a family skilled in the use of mystical psychic energy... ***The Essential Wolverine***, reprinting ***Wolverine #s 24-47*** in a bargain-priced black and white trade paperback, is on the Marvel schedule for mid-March release... It looks very possible that ***The Master of Kung Fu*** could rejoin the ongoing Marvel line-up later in '97... The classic Spider-Man crosses paths with the original X-Men in ***Untold Tales of Spider-Man #21***... For the past four weeks, we've been telling you about the competition to bring *Chris Carter's* Fox-TV series ***Millennium*** to comics; now it appears that the four-way race has been narrowed to a two-publisher competition, with a decision likely to be made in the next few weeks.

QUICKSHOTS

A Marvel-ous Kree-ation

He may be dead, but in his lifetime Captain Marvel was a pretty cosmic guy. He was born a Kree soldier named Mar-Vell; he soon found himself assigned to Earth, where he reported back to a Kree leader who looked like the inspiration for Mork's Orson. Pretty soon, though, he was battling all sorts of adversaries from all over the galaxy, then he founds his existence hopelessly entertwined with Rick Jones, then there was this whole nega-band thing, then the Big C, then—

But boy, what a lifetime he led! And now that lifetime has inspired a new three-issue limited series by *Tom Brevoort*, *Mike Kanterovich*, *Scott Kolins*, and *John Lowe*. Marvel describes this series as a sort of "Captain Marvel Year One." There'll be lots of familiar (albeit alien) faces in these pages, including the Shi'Ar, the Kree, the Brood, the Skrull, the Imperial Guard, the Silver Surfer, and the ultimate cosmic baddie, Galactus himself! If Captain Kirk had been a costumed hero, he'd be Captain Marvel—and that tells you what sort of adventure you can expect in this miniseries. ***The Untold Tales of Captain Marvel #1***, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for February 26th release.

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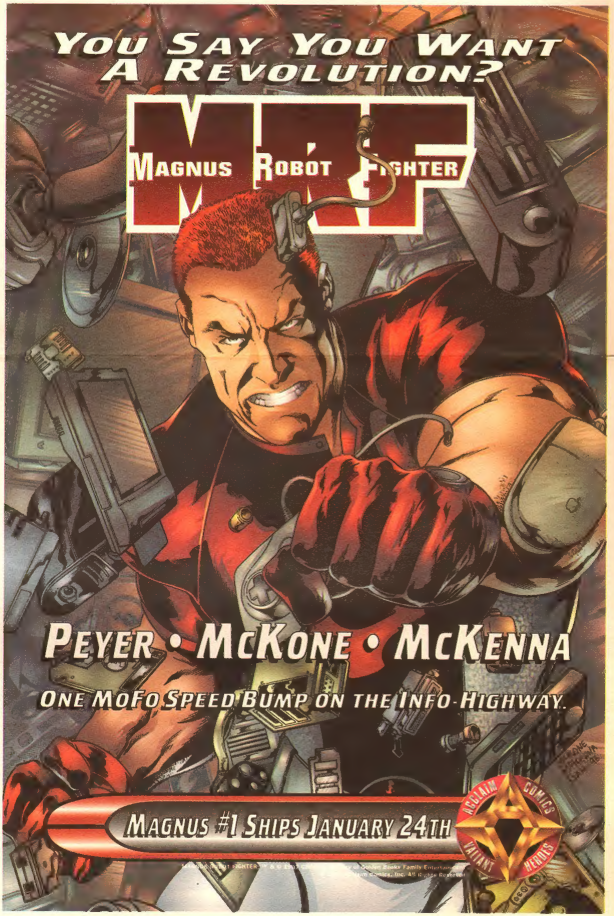
Up and Addam!

What snakes are to Indiana Jones, aliens are to Officer Manhattan. "Let their corpses become a monument to our awesome power!" is his slogan. He absolutely, positively hates 'em—but it seems like every mission given to him by mankind's controllers pits him against one alien swarm after another. But Manhattan, Long John, and Ripper are about to get a new teammate,—Addam Omega, the last remaining biomechanical drone from a scientific expedition gone wrong. All the other drones were destroyed, but Addam survived, brimming with powers, his memory purged. So why has he been assigned to Manhattan's crew? That's a question that Manhattan would love to have the answer to... because he's convinced that there's more here than anyone is telling him.

Addam Omega, a new four-issue limited series debuting in February from Antarctic Press, is the creation of *Bill Hughes*, whose art has been seen previously on ***Star Wars: Droids***. This hard-edged sf adventure book is sure to appeal to fans of ***Aliens;*** look for the first $2.95 issue in February.

Don't Be Ruth-less

You've seen one family comic strip, you've seen 'em all, right? Think again! Rick Detorie's One Big Happy, the story of three close-knit generations of one big happy family, is a modern, stylish, irreverent take on the family comic strip, with the young Ruthie usually stealing the show. The strip, which captures the innocence and mischief of childhood like no new strip since ***Calvin & Hobbes***, has already become a favorite in over 300 newspapers—and now it's breaking into the comic shop market as well. In February, NBM Publishing presents the first ***One Big Happy*** collection, ***Should I Spit On Him?*** This 128-page trade paperback offers a heaping helping of daily and Sunday strips from Detorie's delightful series. ***One Big Happy: Should I Spit On Him?***, a charming all-ages compilation, is priced at $9.95.



Aliens 'n' Us

There's an odd synchronicity to the appearance of an exclusive Aliens story in the pages of *Comic Shop News #500*; way back in 1987, when Ward Batty and Cliff Biggers were putting together *CSN*, Mark Verheiden, Mark Nelson, Mike Richardson, and Randy Stradley were putting together the book that, upon its publication in early '88, would change the course of Dark Horse's future—and would prove that there was still a lot of life left in licensed comics. We were pretty excited about that first *Aliens* series, devoting space to it in three different issues of *CSN;* since that time, Dark Horse and the Aliens have been featured in our pages more than thirty additional times as the Dark Horse gang has continued to attract some of the most innovative talent in the industry to chronicle the war between human and Aliens.

This two-page Aliens prequel leads in to the Aliens story featured in *Dark Horse Presents #117;* for this tale, Dark Horse has enlisted the talent of two acclaimed comics veterans, writer Mike W. Barr and artist Gene Colan. Thanks to Lou Bank, Mike Richarson, Randy Stradley, Mike Barr, and Gene Colan for their generosity in offering this prequel to *CSN*'s readers.

CSN Comics

ALIENS™

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU LOVEBIRDS!
JAMES, LOOK AT THE SHIP--!
MIKE W. BARR- STORY
GENE COLAN- ART
SEAN KONOT- LETTERS
JAMIE S. RICH- EDITS
OH, FINE, CARLA! ADVERTISE TO THE WHOLE BLASTED QUADRANT. WHY DON'T THEY?
JUST MARRIED
I THINK IT'S SWEET.
I KNOW, BUT IT'LL PLAY HAVOK WITH OUR DRAG COEFFICIENT IF WE HAVE TO PUT DOWN IN ATMOSPHERE.
SO BUSINESS-LIKE, SOMETIMES I THINK YOU DON'T HAVE A ROMANTIC BONE IN YOUR BODY.
THEN WHY DID YOU MARRY ME, MRS. BILLINGS?
I DON'T KNOW, MR. BILLINGS...
Aliens ™&© 1997 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights.

An Epock-al Adventure

Stephen King once said, "You don't need monsters and ghosts to drive someone crazy. Just go into their house every day when they're not at home and move their furniture around a little bit every day—that'll do it!" Jax Epock can certainly attest to that; the heroine of the book Quicken: Forbidden has discovered that someone—or something—is tampering with her life in little ways... and now they seem intent upon destroying her. It all began when Jax accidentally crossed through a space-time continuum into an alternate dimension; now that she's come back, she seems to have brought something with her...

Quicken: Forbidden #1, the debut issue of a disturbing new series that offers a disquieting twist on ***Alice's Adventures In Wonderland,*** is published by Cryptic Press; look for the $2.95 premiere issue in February.

CSN COMICS: ALIENS

... MY MOMMA TOLD ME NEVER TO GET INVOLVED WITH A MAN WHO'D MAKE ME WORK ON MY HONEYMOON!
JUST CONSIDER IT "POSTPONED," HONEY. A FEW MORE OF THESE, AND WE CAN AFFORD A REAL HONEYMOON!
LET'S GO EARN IT!
NO EVIDENCE OF ALIEN INFESTATION HERE; BETTER GO FURTHER OUT.
WE'LL CIRCLE THE WHOLE SECTOR IF WE HAVE TO...
...AND I BET WE'LL FIND SOME, SOONER OR LATER!
CONTINUED IN DARK HORSE PRESENTS #117! ON SALE JANUARY 14th!
DARK HORSE COMICS

Roel Entertainment

It's rare for a new talent in the field to make such an impression that his publisher would use his name as the title of his book—but that's what's happened to Roel, a young artist who's about to make his debut in ***Roel***, a 32-page black and white comic from Sirius Entertainment.

When Roel submitted samples of his work to Sirius publisher *Robb Horan*, "I was stunned to find out that Roel was unpublished so far," Horan said. "Aside from being possibly the most important new talent to emerge in comic art this year, Roel is also one of the most pleasant and professional-minded creators I have ever met."

The result is ***Roel #1***, a one-shot volume that features a wordless fantasy tale, **Domonick**, created by Roel, as well as a gallery section showcasing his work. His art has elicited praise from such talents as *Brom* and *Boris Vallejo*. And Roel is already at work on other material, including a story slated to appear in Sirius' ***Crypt of Dawn*** series.

Roel #1, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for February release.

Where There's a Will (Shakespeare, That Is), There's a Way...

Okay, start scanning those reading lists for school: Acclaim Comics is doing what they can to make education easier for you. Beginning in January, they're releasing four digest-sized ***Classics Illustrated Study Guides*** every month. These full-color digest-sized books feature the contents of the classic ***Classics*** (okay, it sounds redundant, but you get the idea), supplemented by sixteen pages of study guide material focusing on the work's characters, themes, influences, etc. And these folks know which authors make the reading lists the most: they have a *Twain* and a *Shakespeare* title on the schedule every month, along with two more great literary works.

In January, Acclaim's Classics lineup includes ***Huckleberry Finn, Hamlet, Crime & Punishment,*** and ***The Odyssey***; in February, they offer ***A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Prince & the Pauper, Great Expectations,*** and ***Moby Dick***; and in March, you can look for ***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Les Miserables, Oliver Twist,*** and ***Macbeth***. These comic sections of these books aren't just reduced-sized reprints of the originals; instead, the books have been recolored and reformatted for the new package, and today's comics talents have been called on to supply the cover art for these digest-sized packages. Each 64-page Classics volume is priced at $4.99, and Acclaim intends to keep each edition in print indefinitely. And as you're reading these classic adaptations, just imagine what the field would have been like if these guys had been doing comics...

Big Changes In Store for Superman

Over the years, Superman has gone through a variety of changes, but the fundamental nature of the Man of Steel has remained the same. That won't be true, however, after ***Superman #123*** reaches comic shops in March. At that point, everything you knew about Superman's powers, abilities, and appearance becomes comic book history as DC introduces the new Superman—and we do mean *new!*

"All his traditional powers are gone," editor Joey Cavalieri said. "Instead of the living solar battery he's always been, Superman is now an energy being. Superman doesn't exactly fly any more, he zaps from place to place like a bolt of lightning, though he has problems with the landings at first."

Dan Jurgens reinforces the significance of the change. "Superman's new powers are a very drastic change from the powers he previously had. For example, though bullets would bounce off him in the past, they now pass right through him." Of course, changes of this magnitude also force Superman to "relearn" his superheroic role.

The entire storyline continues from DC's ***Final Night*** series from last fall; however, Dan Jurgens points out that this major change actually predates that series. "This was planned about a year ago," Jurgens said. "***Final Night*** has nothing to do with this, although it did work in with the changes very well. Final Night wasn't even conceived of before this was all worked out."

In the months since ***Final Night***, Superman has struggled to regain his powers; now that he has them back, though, he has discovered that some of the powers aren't working quite the same as they did before. These changes become more evident in ***The Man of Steel #67***, a March 5th release. In this issue by Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove, and Dennis Janke, a being from the bottle city of Kandor menaces Metropolis—but Superman is having trouble controlling his own powers sufficiently to combat this new enemy.

The new powers are fully developed in ***Superman #183***, a March 18th release by Dan Jurgens, Ron Frenz, and Josef Rubinstein. Not only does Superman have new powers, but he also has a new costume and a new symbol—but who is responsible for this suit that helps Superman to control his abilities? This landmark issue, featuring a new Superman logo, will also feature a special glow-in-the-dark cover on stiff paper stock, all at the same price as a standard comic.

On March 19th, the story continues in ***Adventures of Superman #446*** by Karl Kesel, Stuart Immonen, and José Marzan. The newly-powered Superman faces Metallo... the only adversary who might be able to use his

art ™&© 1993 DC Comics

amazing new powers to defeat the Man of Steel.

Superman calls on outside help in ***Action Comics #733.*** In a story by David Michelinie, Tom Grummett, and Denis Rodier, Superman calls on the Ray (whose energy powers resemble Superman's) for guidance.

And it's not just Superman who's undergoing some major changes. Clark Kent is also in for a dramatic revamping. While the costumed hero is an energy being, the apparently normal Clark Kent becomes a normal human being, sans superpowers of any sort. "So not only does Clark have to deal with all the problems these uncontrollable new powers bring him," Cavalieri said, "he has to worry about all the normal stuff that humans have to deal with—like head colds and torn muscles—things he hasn't had to think about since his powers kicked in as a teen."

Will this mean a real change in the Superman/Clark Kent secret identity? "I don't think the relationship between Clark and Superman will be any different," Jurgens said, "because Clark's motivations are the same. But it makes his life more difficult, because he still has a job as Clark to do—and he's no longer the world's fastest typist!"

And there are other characters who are concerned about this major change. "Lois is predictably and understandably worried," Cavalieri said. But this won't translate to major problems between the two, Jurgens points out. "The relationship will be made stronger as Clark deals with the problems of his new powers. He's lucky to have a woman like Lois!"

Jurgens says that, whenever creators plan a change of this magnitude, they put a great deal of thought into it. He's confident, though, that readers will be pleased with the results of these changes. "There are always trepidations when you approach *any* storyline with Superman.," Jurgens said. "But, if you remain true to the character and keep him consistent within those changes, it can be done in such a way that it will provide a very entertaining story. "

Of course, past changes in Superman—even insignificant changes like the length of his hair—have generated a great deal of talk among comics fans, and this will certainly be no different. Fans seem more focused on even the slightest changes in the Man of Steel—perhaps because of his significance as the archetypal superhero. "That's true," Jurgens said, "and it just goes to prove that he's still number one in fans' minds."

Are these changes just part of a short-lived storyline? "We have no plans to reverse these changes," Jurgens says. And, as another sign that these changes are going to be around for a while, the first new-Superman merchandising item is already in the works: DC is soliciting for a ***Superman '97 Luminescent Watch***, a $64.95 limited edition timepiece featuring the new Superman logo design; the watch is slated for late May release.

The change is coming—and you can learn all about it first-hand for only $1.95 a week, beginning in early March!

by CLIFF BIGGERS

The Games People Play

~ The granddaddy of all role-playing games gets a new beginning in January—literally. ***The AD&D Complete Starter Set*** is the newest, and most complete way to begin role-playing in the world of *AD&D*. This new set includes everything that you need to start playing, with plans to then move on to the advanced *AD&D* book system. To help get you started, this new set also includes three ready to run adventures to help fledgling gamemasters and players get a feel for the fantasy role-playing genre. Keep an eye open for this new beginners set in January.

~ Comics great Mike Kaluta will be providing the cover art for an upcoming expansion for the *Fading Suns* game from Holistic Designs, Inc.

~ The latest CCG from Chaosium hits stores this January, and its a real dream! ***Dreamlands*** is the new expansion for the *Mythos* CCG, based on the works of H.P. Lovecraft. This is more than just an expansion ,though, as it also serves as a stand-alone game. The Dreamlands is one of the most unique and interesting worlds created by Lovecraft, and now it becomes something more as it makes its way to the card market. The game is based on the idea that you can travel between the world of the waking and the world of dreams, where your deepest desires await—and your most horrible nightmares lie in ambush. The game uses a combination of characters, allies, and monsters to create drama and action. Since this is a part of the *Mythos* game, the basic concept is sure to remain the same: don't go crazy. This also allows, in theory, players to combine the madness of the Cthulhu *Mythos* with the *Mythos* of The Dreamlands. *The Dreamlands* will be available in both starters and boosters. The starters will retail for the suggested price of $8.95. The boosters will retail for $2.95. *The Dreamlands* will be available in January.

~ After several years, *Chill* has returned. The first expansion for Mayfair's *Chill* game in three years will be out in January, and it's called ***Unknown Providence***. This new release isn't the end either, as this new adventure is the first in a planned three-year story arc. Not only does ***Unknown Providence*** include the opening chapter in this adventure series, but it also contains a wealth of source material on the New England area. Actually, it isn't even an adventure, it's a whole selection of adventures that fit together as a campaign or a bunch of stand-alone material. This is 128-pages of *Chill* material that you've never seen before, and despite the name, this game isn't on ice. ***Unknown Providence*** will be out in January for the suggested retail price of $15.00.

~ If you don't like the dark tone that games have taken lately, then you certainly don't want this—well, maybe. ***Blue Planet*** is the new role-playing game from Biohazard Games that doesn't explore he depths of space, the depths of society, or the depths of your math skills, this game explores the depths of the Earth's oceans. This is a game that is designed for mature gamers looking for a realistic gaming world. Players create characters with goals, motivations, histories, and personality traits in a world that borders on hard science-fiction and environmental conservation. The game doesn't shy away from all of the traditions of role-playing, though, giving us a simple to use system for that includes tabletop combat and dynamic vehicle rules that allow for 3D dogfights. To help solidify the designs of the game, 10% of the proceeds from sales will be given to conservation groups. ***Blue Planet*** will be available in January for the suggested retail price of $25.00.

~ Marvel and TSR are joining forces once again for a new game—but this time, it's a collectible dice game that brings the two companies together. ***Marvel Super Dice*** will feature heroes from the X-Men and Excalibur versus a variety of supervillains; each game set includes 16 dice (3 rare, 5 uncommon, and 8 common) and game files representing HQ, city, and out-of-town areas, as well as basic rules for two and three player games; ***Marvel Super Dice,*** priced at $14.95 per game set, should be in stores in March.

~ This may sound a little shady, but the first expansion for ***Noir*** is on its way. ***Faces in the Crowd*** is the new character supplement for the hard-edged film noir role-playing game from Archon Gaming. This supplement is usable for all types of characters in the *Noir* system, not just one or two specific types. The supplement is designed to deal with the characters and how they can effect the inner workings of The Big City. Everything from their personal lives, their trials and tribulations, their joys and sorrows, and even their innermost secrets and fears can directly play into the campaign, creating a depth of both design and purpose. This is one of those must-have products for *Noir* players, giving you all the inner information to make your characters all that they can be—and no, they aren't going in the Army. ***Faces in the Crowd*** for the ***Noir*** role-playing game will be out in January for the suggested retail price of $18.95.

~ Okay, it's true. ***Magic Windows*** is coming out, and it isn't a game, it isn't for the computer, and it isn't even magic—but it can be used with it. ***Magic Windows*** is the new release from FPG that allows you to truly customize your customizable card game. ***Magic Windows*** provides a set of high quality art on stickers designed to go over the images on your CCG. There is art for fantasy, science-fiction, and everything else included in this set of over two hundred images. Artists for the series include Brom, Larry Elmore, Keith Parkinson, Rowena, and many others. Hey, if you want to make things really weird, why don't you use these stickers on Guardians and Dark Ages cards so that the art changes, but the artist doesn't. ***Magic Windows*** will have fourteen stickers a pack, with a suggested retail cost of $0.57 a pack. ***Magic Windows*** is scheduled to ship this January.

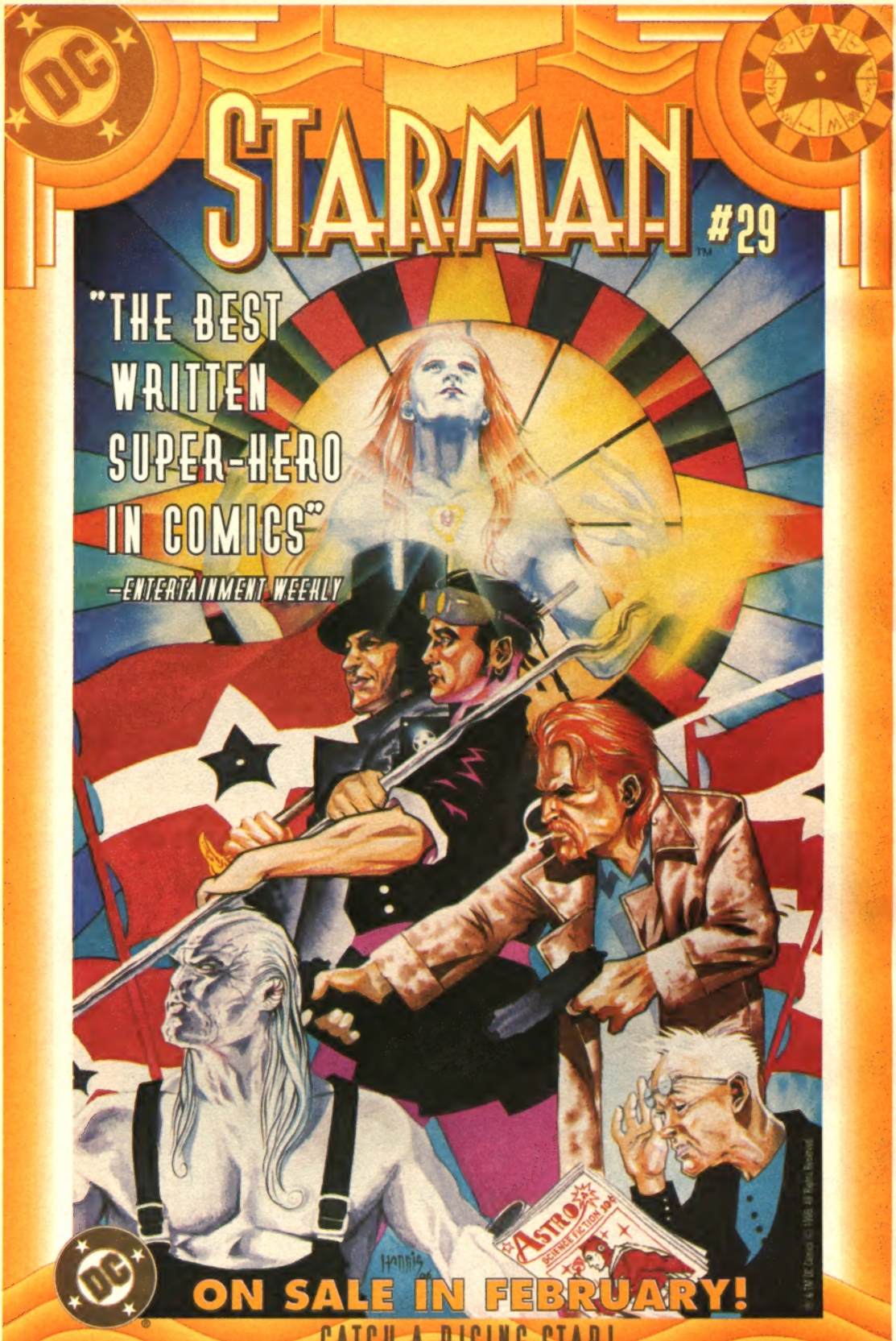
~ ***Battle of Coventry*** is the new expansion for the ***BattleTech*** game system from Fasa—though you might have seen it before. This new scenario pack is based on one of the nastiest conflicts in the history of Mech warfare, as it was presented in the novel ***Malicious Intent*** by Michael Stackpole. That's right, the battle between The Wolf's Dragoons and the Jade Flacon Clan can be reenacted with you determining the final outcome. ***The Battle for Coventry*** is on, and you are at the helm. This is a great scenario, pitting two of the most famous, and most successful groups of warriors against each other in head to head combat, and you can take either side. It isn't going to be easy, no matter which side you choose, but it *is* going to be one of the most entertaining. ***The Battle of Coventry*** for the ***BattleTech*** role-playing game will be available in January of the suggested retail price of $12.00.

~ The information about ***Magic: The Gathering—Fifth Edition*** is starting to come out. What can we tell you? Well, for one thing, some of the cards will reprint from the ***Chronicles*** series (something that Wizards of the Coast implied that they would never do...), there will be over four hundred cards new to this series, with new cards from ***Ice Age, Fallen Empires, Homelands,*** and others added as well. Also, yes, there will be new art for most of the cards in the release, making some fans very happy, and others very unhappy. The tentative release date for this latest edition of ***Magic: The Gathering*** is this spring; the price remains the same at $8.95 a starter, $2.95 a booster.

by BRETT BROOKS

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and companies whose cooperation has been invaluable in producing 500 issues of *Comic Shop News*. In particular we'd like to thank DC Comics and Acclaim Comics for their support.

Most importantly, we'd like to thank the over 1,000 retailers who pay for and distribute *CSN* each week. They want their customers to enjoy coming into the shop, and to have the most current news about upcoming releases and we're honored that they've allowed us to provide it for 500 issues.



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